



DIABETES EDUCATION SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

*Designed to provide diabetes
self-management education for
vocational rehabilitation consumers.*

— TEXAS —
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES



People who are blind face unique challenges when managing diabetes. Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) contracts with diabetes educators who receive special training in providing diabetes self-management education to individuals with disabilities.

Texas Workforce Solutions is comprised of the Texas Workforce Commission, 28 local workforce development boards and our service-providing partners. Together we provide workforce, education, training and support services, including vocational rehabilitation assistance for the people of Texas.

Diabetes is a lifelong disease that prevents your body from properly using the energy from the foods you eat. If you have diabetes, TWS-VRS Diabetes Education Services can help you learn about diabetes and how to take care of yourself.

You may need diabetes education if:

- You are newly diagnosed with diabetes.
- You are about to have surgery or a medical procedure, and your diabetes is not under control. When your blood sugar is high, your body is unable to heal properly, and the procedure might not be as successful.
- You are having trouble managing your diabetes.
- Diabetes is affecting your ability to work.
- Your diabetes is out of control and may lead to additional complications.

Your VR counselor can help you access these services or you can contact TWS-VRS at 800-628-5115 for assistance.

The American Association of Diabetes Educators has identified seven self-care behaviors that can help you live a healthy lifestyle. Your diabetes educator will discuss these topics with you and help you find ways to keep your blood sugar under control.

1. Healthy eating:

Nutrition is the way we fuel our bodies. When you have diabetes, your body struggles to use that fuel. You must watch what you eat, as well as how much and how often you eat. It is also important to stay at a healthy weight. Talk to your educator about the foods you enjoy; he or she can help you put together an eating plan that is right for you.

2. Being active:

Most people know that exercise is good for us. If you have diabetes, regular exercise can lower your blood sugar levels, which improves your body's ability to use insulin, and can also help you control your weight. Physical activity does not need to be strenuous or take a lot of time. Talk to your doctor about whether it is safe for you to exercise.

3. Monitoring:

One thing your doctor is interested in is your blood sugar log. Monitoring blood sugar levels helps you and your doctor identify possible problems. Your doctor may also request blood or urine tests for things such as your hemoglobin, A1C and cholesterol. Your doctor might also check your blood pressure, take your current weight and ask you about your medications.

4. Taking medications:

Sometimes healthy eating and being active are not enough; you may also need to take medication to lower your blood sugar, blood pressure or cholesterol levels and to prevent or treat specific complications. Taking insulin does not mean you have failed to manage your

diabetes. In fact, taking insulin as prescribed shows your commitment to good health. Your diabetes educator can help you understand how your medications work and how to take them safely.

5. Healthy coping:

Living with diabetes, even when you know what to do, is not easy. You can't do it alone. You need the help of your health care team and friends and family to be successful. Your diabetes educator can help you identify others who can help you with your diabetes.

6. Problem solving:

You've been doing a great job managing your diabetes, and then something comes along and throws you off course. Your diabetes educator can teach you how to identify problems and give you techniques to find solutions.

7. Reducing risk:

Diabetes affects many parts of the body. The good news is that the complications from diabetes can be prevented by maintaining healthy habits. Your diabetes educator can talk to you about what to do in certain situations, like when your blood sugar is too high or too low. Your educator can also make you more aware of symptoms that might indicate a problem.

Resources:

Texas Diabetes Council

www.dshs.state.tx.us/diabetes

American Diabetes Association

www.diabetes.org

American Dietetic Association

www.eatright.org

D Life

www.dlife.com

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

The National Federation of the Blind and American Foundation for the Blind have many diabetes resources:

www.nfb.org and **www.afb.org**

For more information, call **800-628-5115**.



TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS-VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

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Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Relay Texas:
800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice).

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